

## UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY MEASURES WITH ENGLISH LEARNERS

### COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (CALP)

There are two types of language proficiency: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill (BICS) and Cognitive-Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1984).

**BICS** is defined as language proficiency in everyday communicative contexts, or those aspects of language proficiency that seem to be acquired without formal educational interventions.

**CALP** is defined as language proficiency required in academic settings, or distinctive language proficiency emerging as distinct due to formal schooling. It is further defined as literacy skills requiring conceptual and linguistic knowledge.

### Woodcock-Johnson Oral Language Assessment of CALP

CALP can be calculated with the Online scoring program for the WJ OL reports. The CALP levels are available in English and Spanish. They describe language proficiency in English and Spanish for Oral Language, Broad Oral Language, Listening Comprehension, and Oral Expression clusters as well as for the three Spanish-language clusters: Lenguaje oral, Amplio lenguaje oral, and Comprension auditiva.

The Table below is taken from the WJ IV Oral Language Examiner's manual edited by Maher and Wendling (2014)

### Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Scores and Interpretation

CALP SCORE	CALP Level	W Difference	RPI	Instructional Implications
6	Very Advanced	+31 and above	100/90	Extremely Easy
5	Advanced	+14 to +30	98/90 to 100/90	Very Easy
4-5 (4.5)	Fluent to Advanced	+7 to +13	95/90 to 98/90	Easy
4	Fluent	-6 to +6	82/90 to 95/90	Manageable
3-4 (3.5)	Limited to Fluent	-13 to -7	67/90 to 82/90	Difficult
3	Limited	-30 to -14	24/90 to 67/90	Very Difficult
2	Very Limited	-50 to -31	3/90 to 24/90	Extremely Difficult
1	Extremely Limited	-51 and below	0/90 to 3/90	Nearly Impossible

## WIDA Access

**WIDA** is the acronym for “World-class Instructional Design and Assessment.”

What IS **WIDA**? **WIDA** is a consortium of states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners. The state of Michigan participates with the WIDA and this is the assessment used with all English Learners to assess their proficiency with the English language.

The WIDA assesses Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. The score report for the WIDA will provide a Scaled Score with a range of 100 – 600, and a Proficiency Level. The following chart provides information on how to interpret the proficiency levels for students in Grades 1-12:

**Table 4: Performance Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency**

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners process, understand, produce, or use:

<b>6 - Reaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specialized or technical language reflective of the content area at grade level</li> <li>a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level</li> <li>oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers</li> </ul>
<b>5 - Bridging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specialized or technical language of the content areas</li> <li>a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports</li> <li>oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade-level material</li> </ul>
<b>4 - Expanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specific and some technical language of the content areas</li> <li>a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs</li> <li>oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic, or interactive support</li> </ul>
<b>3 - Developing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>general and some specific language of the content areas</li> <li>expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs</li> <li>oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative, or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic, or interactive support</li> </ul>
<b>2 - Beginning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>general language related to the content areas</li> <li>phrases or short sentences</li> <li>oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support</li> </ul>
<b>1 - Entering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas</li> <li>words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice, or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support</li> <li>oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statement with sensory, graphic or interactive support</li> </ul>

Taken from the WIDA Consortium.